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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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SUBJECT Conditions on Rügen Island

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. The Rügendamm (causeway) connecting Altefähr, on the island of Rügen, with the mainland town of Stralsund was blown by the SS on the day before the arrival of Russian troops, but has since been rebuilt with a strong wooden span. Pedestrians and motor vehicles may use the causeway, but the railroad line to the mainland has for some reason not yet been repaired.
2. Both ends of the Rügendamm are guarded by Russian militia with German policemen as assistants. All travellers, even Russian military personnel, must show identification papers and submit to a cursory baggage inspection. The efficiency of the control posts varies and permission to pass is often dependent on the caprice of the sentries. The guards, including officers, can often be bribed with Schnapps. Native islanders with papers issued by the Rügen administration and stamped with a Russian seal are usually allowed to pass without question, but other Germans are often turned away. Frequently persons with valid documents are barred passage or delayed for several hours, while at other times, especially at night and during bad weather, no inspections are made at all. The erratic nature of the control system is often blamed on the illiteracy of some of the guards.
3. During the ice-free months a ferry plies between the mainland and Rügen. The schedule is made quite irregular by engine breakdowns and the occasional running out of fuel. Attempts are made to achieve connections with the trains from Sassnitz or Bergen and with the narrow-gauge line which runs from Altefähr to the eastern part of the island.
4. Until the end of November 1946 the steamer "Stralsund", which ran from Stralsund to Wolgast, put in twice a week at the harbor of Lauterbach on Rügen. It remained there overnight on the return trip to Stralsund, but was seldom inspected by the Russian militia. This made it very popular with persons who wished to escape document and baggage-checking points. The steamer was also a favorite means used for the shipment of furniture and goods.
5. A single-tracked north-south railway line runs from the Rügen harbor of Sassnitz to Altefähr by way of Bergen. At least one train runs daily in each direction. A branch line runs from Bergen to Lauterbach harbor by way of Putbus. The branch line which used to lead from Lieschow to Bergen and Sassnitz via the bathing resort at Binz has been abandoned and the rails have been removed. Narrow-gauge lines connect Altefähr with the

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Economic Situation
Rügen Island

Admitt (Gen) - 9 Aug 1947

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Next Review

bathing resorts of Binz, Baabe, Sellin, and Gohren via Garz and Puthus. Another narrow-gauge line connects Bergen with Trent and with Altenkirchen, near Arkona. A network of fairly good motor roads covers Rügen and penetrates the major peninsulas.

6. Rügen is extremely over-populated, both with people who were evacuated during the war and with DPs. All the numerous beach hotels and cottages have been put to use, as well as farm buildings and private homes. The food situation is naturally desperate, especially since all fish caught by the Rügen fishing fleet are confiscated by the Red Army. Only the discarded fish heads and entrails from the cleaning stations are passed on to the local citizens. The death rate from disease and malnutrition is very high and many people commit suicide. The land reform program was poorly planned and executed in a most arbitrary fashion. The former farmhands who replaced the old landlords grossly mismanaged their portions of the estates and brought in a poor harvest in 1946.
7. The Rügen population is very dissatisfied with its lot, a condition which is reflected in the CNU majorities which were returned in the district and Landtag elections despite a flood of SED propaganda. SED members on Rügen are mostly ex-SPD men. Wishful rumors are often spread to the effect that the British will shortly occupy the island.
8. The Russian commandant of the island maintains his headquarters at Bergen, where he is assisted by officials of the Agriculture and Food Ministries. The MVD on Rügen is ubiquitous and much feared. It is doubtful that the island is fortified. The only restricted area consists of the grounds of the lighthouse and the observation station at Arkona, which is manned by a very small force.

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